

ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Arthur P. J. Mol
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This newsletter partly looks back, with reports on a number of successful RC24 conferences at Marseille France and Bath England as well as at several RC24 sessions at a broader conferences in Stockholm. These reports give proof of a lively, active and diverse research community. But the newsletter of course mostly looks forward.

There are two major things that need the immediate attention of all RC24 members: the upcoming ISA World Congress in July 2006 in Durban, South Africa; and the nominations and later elections of a new RC24 board. Let me introduce both of these briefly. You can find more information in other parts of this newsletter.

The World Congress, held once every four years, brings together between 4,000 and 6,000 sociologists and social scientists from all around the world. It is, as most major conferences are, chaotic, overwhelming, and variable in quality but very good for meeting colleagues and strengthening and renewing your networks. RC24 is always strongly represented at these events. As a research committee we have managed to secure seventeen interesting sessions at Durban, each with two session coordinators. As most scholars will only be able to travel to such events if they present a paper, I urge you to take the deadline into account. November 15, 2005, is the last day that session coordinators are accepting abstracts in their RC24 sessions (The 1 October 2005 deadline given on the ISA website is wrong). Please make sure that your abstract has been received into one of the RC24 sessions by that date.

The other major upcoming event is the renewal of the RC24 board. A board is installed for 4 years running from World Congress to World Congress. In our statutes the procedures for renewing the board are detailed. Following those procedures the current board has set up a nominations committee which is actively seeking nominations for board candidates. If you would like to serve on the board, or if you know a colleague who would do an excellent job on the RC24 board, please get in contact with the nominations committee (see below for the details on that). Please pay attention to the closing day of the nominations. Later a mailed ballot will be organized for members to choose among the nominees, where all RC24 members can vote. You will be informed on that separately.

As usual, most RC24 information and documents, as well as earlier newsletters, can be found at our website: www.environment-societyisa.org

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

by Ray Murphy
Editor of the Newsletter and Secretary of RC24
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On 26 December 2004 a tsunami occurred in the Indian Ocean where developing countries had decided that an early-warning system would be too expensive, killing over 200,000 people. On 29 August 2005 Hurricane Katrina struck the below sea-level city of New Orleans USA killing 1,000 people and causing \$100-\$200 billion in property damage. New Orleans had been “protected” by levees (dikes) inadequate for category 4 and 5 hurricanes, by a feuding Democrat mayor and Democrat governor, by a Republican President unwilling to interrupt his vacation, and by a Federal Emergency Management Agency subordinated to Homelands Security and presided over by a person who got the job because of political connections but not experience in emergency management.

Disasters are increasing in number and destructiveness as more humans and their constructions are placed in the path of overwhelming disturbances of nature. Poverty is an important source of vulnerability, but the prosperous can be physically vulnerable too. Fatalities can be diminished by investing financial and organizational resources in mitigation, but this involves replacing an acute problem with a chronic one, and constitutes an investment decision-makers are at times unwilling or unable to make. Whether it be poor countries or rich ones, natural disasters result not only from nature’s constructions but also from human social constructions or lack of them. Blaming disaster solely on acts of nature (or acts of god) and claiming unforeseeability are convenient excuses for not mitigating physical and social vulnerability and not acknowledging risk.

Why are environmental problems problematic and risk societies dangerous? Although there are other answers, one of the most significant involves the potential for slow-onset disasters. Discourse and beliefs lead to practices that have material consequences. Social constructions that affect nature’s constructions could undermine the essential infrastructure nature provides or unleash disturbances of nature remarkable in their frequency, intensity, or scope. “Unnatural disasters”, “man-made disasters”, “the incubation of disaster”, “the failure of foresight”, “catastrophic mistakes”, “the political ecology of disaster”, “social and biophysical vulnerability”, and other such concepts developed by disaster sociologists are particularly relevant for environmental sociologists studying problems like global climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, desertification, destruction of fisheries, nuclear energy, etc.

Disaster sociologists have explained disasters as disjunctions between dominant beliefs about nature and their referents, or to reapply Latour’s metaphor, disasters constitute events whereby nature objects to what has been said about it. Disasters involve occurrences where the socially constructed discourse of security is publically refuted by a construction of nature, a material prompt so visible that it incites either conflict, or solidarity, or some mix of the two depending on both social and material contingencies. Disaster makes social fault lines more visible and has the potential to open up the social order to contestation and struggle. The experience of disaster is an important stimulus to social learning, and disaster sociology has investigated why such learning does or does not (as in repeat disasters) take place. Whereas disaster sociologists tend to study preparation for, response to, and learning from disasters, the objects of study of environmental sociologists amount to the investigation of disaster prevention. The latter is far from straightforward. A harbinger of danger is not the same as a false alarm. Awareness of peril is different from paranoia. These must be distinguished, yet our distinctions are fallible, even scientific ones. Disaster reminds us that some claims of security or risk are nevertheless better than others. Environmental sociology

focusses on the investigation of learning by anticipation so as to avoid disasters, whether such learning is based on scientific knowledge (e.g., IPCC concerning climate change) or lay knowledge (e.g., mountain residents observing glaciers receding or Inuit noticing the shrinking of Arctic ice floes or the melting of permafrost). Environmental sociology deals with the difficult, contested question of whether learning about environmental problems can occur while citizens experience prosperity or aspire to it and when the possibility of disaster can be dismissed as occurring only after their lifetimes are over, if at all, rather than being experienced.

One of the little pleasures of being Secretary of RC24 is that the office holder can usurp a small spot in the Newsletter called "Notes from the Editor" to blow off a bit of steam on a topic of his or her choice. My mandate as Secretary ends next summer at the World Congress meetings when a new Secretary takes over. So I would like to invite aspiring steam-blowers to run for the office of Secretary in the upcoming elections announced below. My invitation extends to all the other positions as well: President, Vice-President, and members of the Board of Governors of RC24. These are unpaid positions where incumbents have to find funds for their travel themselves, but the positions are very rewarding in that they are crucial for the development of a global environmental sociology, for networking, as well as constituting a valuable notch in a person's CV.

RC24 is now preparing for what I have called the "sociological Olympics": the World Congress of the International Sociological Association that takes place every four years. The next one will be in Durban, South Africa in July 2006. Please send your abstracts to the session organizers listed at the end of this Newsletter by 15 November 2005 (The 1 October 2005 deadline given on the ISA website is wrong). The ISA has limited resources and hence sets the number of sessions each RC can have according to the number of members "in good standing" (meaning paid-up members of both ISA and RC24). The ISA will review its membership figures again on January 15, 2006 and according to the new count either approve or drop sessions from the programme submitted by each RC. If your membership lapses between now and then and you are late in renewing it, the result could be the loss of one of our sessions in Durban, perhaps yours. So please renew your membership in both the ISA and RC24 on time, and encourage other environmental sociologists to join.

Everyone Should Have an "Enemy" like Fred: A Tribute to Frederick H. Buttel*

by Riley E. Dunlap
RC 24 President (1994-98)

*This is a slight revision of a tribute read at the RC 24 Business Meeting held at the World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology, Stockholm, July, 2005.

When traveling around the world giving talks on environmental sociology I have, on several occasions, been asked about my relationship with Fred Buttel. Because our early debate over the paradigmatic status of environmental sociology received considerable attention, some colleagues have wondered if Fred and I had become "enemies" as a young Japanese scholar put it a few years ago. I always reacted with amusement to these inquiries since nothing could be further from the truth, and welcomed opportunities to tell people that I considered Fred one of my best friends and most highly valued colleagues.

I first met Fred at the 1974 ASA meeting in Montreal when he was still working on his Ph.D. at Wisconsin and I was a new Assistant Professor at Washington State University. Because of our similar interests we had already exchanged some papers, and I had read his M.A. thesis while he had read my doctoral dissertation. We were both analyzing survey data on environmental attitudes, examining among other things political cleavages (i.e., partisan and ideological differences) in public support for environmental protection. Because of our common research interests from graduate-school days, and shortly

thereafter a shared interest in trying to develop a field of environmental sociology, Fred and I quickly recognized that we could either become intense competitors or friendly colleagues. We readily and wisely chose the latter.

It was in this context that Fred's comment (*The American Sociologist*, 1978) on Catton's and my early effort to define the field of environmental sociology and particularly to explicate its paradigmatic implications was greeted by us as the friendly critique he intended. Indeed, it played a key role in helping Catton and me revise our argument a couple of years later when we had a venue that—unlike the original piece which was included in a symposium with strict page limits—allowed us ample space to make our case. Our revision of the HEP/NEP argument, which thanks in part to Fred has become widely known, benefitted greatly from his critique of our preliminary statement.

Although we never again had a formal “debate” in the sense of a published exchange, Fred and I did have something of a running debate over the field of environmental sociology that permeated many of our publications. A discerning reader can detect subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle, reactions to one another's evolving positions in several of our publications over a quarter of a century. In a nutshell, these not-so-obvious debates took the form of me pushing to keep a strong ecological orientation, and a focus on environmental phenomena, central to environmental sociology and Fred pushing to ensure that our field was fully engaged with key theoretical currents in the larger discipline. I would like to think that both emphases have been important for our field, but clearly it has been crucial for a mature environmental sociology to engage major theoretical debates within sociology as a whole—and in my opinion no one contributed to such engagement more than Fred.

Fred was the best-read colleague I've ever known, and he had the ability to draw upon and contribute to an amazingly wide range of literatures—including rural sociology, political sociology, the sociology of agriculture, and the sociology of science and technology as well as environmental sociology. The breadth and scope as well as the sheer amount of his scholarship are incredibly impressive and exceedingly rare in our era of specialization. His environmental work in particular reveals an ever-evolving concern with providing sociological insights for environmental analyses, consistently drawing upon the latest theoretical developments within the larger discipline and relevant speciality areas.

There were a few instances when I felt that Fred's work took a wrong turn, prompting a critical response on my part. But even if I was correct in those assessments it's certainly understandable that a scholar who covered such a vast range of intellectual spaces might enter a dead-end once or twice, as those of us who cover far less ground are also apt to do. But overall Fred clearly made far more productive than non-productive turns, and the result is that he contributed enormously to the intellectual development of environmental sociology (as well as to several other fields). No one has done a better job, in my view, of showing us how to adapt and apply the insights of both classical and contemporary sociological theory for analyses of environmental issues than did Fred. In the process he helped build bridges between the more empirically oriented American version and the more theoretically oriented European version of environmental sociology, and thus played a crucial role in establishing our field as an intellectually vital area of study at the international level.

Yet, while I have enormous respect for Fred's scholarly contributions, and will always highly value them, it's the human being that I shall miss most. Fred said he hoped that he had been a fundamentally decent person, but of course he's remembered as much more than that by the many of us who were privileged to know him personally. Indeed, he was one of the very finest, most decent, human beings I have ever met, and my life as well as my scholarship have been enriched from having known him as both colleague and friend.

Fred's wonderful sense of humor and positive outlook on life, even when engaged in a long life-and-death struggle of his own, were remarkable. On many occasions when I found myself struggling with personal problems—such as bouts of severe depression in the 1980s or a cardiac scare and related stress in the 1990s—a pat on the back, verbal encouragement or just a good joke from Fred helped cheer me up and

keep me going. That he could do this for me, as he did for many others, even when enduring his own terribly serious medical battle was astounding. He truly became a role model for me, even if one I know I will never match, in terms of how to deal with life's sometimes unfair burdens.

In short, I cannot find words adequate for expressing my affection and admiration for Fred Buttel. He was a rare gem among academics, a superb scholar and a wonderful and generous human being, and my life (along with so many others) is richer because of him. Everyone should be so fortunate as to have an "enemy" like Fred.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS, RC 24 Election

The RC 24 Nominations Committee appointed by the current Board is seeking nominations for the next election, to be held this winter. We will be electing a new set of officers to assume positions at the World Congress in Durban next July, which they will hold for the next four years. The Committee is soliciting nominations for President, Vice-President, Secretary and six Board Members (the Treasurer is appointed by the President). The key duties of these officers are as follows:

- a) The President represents RC24 in all meetings or correspondence with the ISA and other bodies, is responsible for coordinating the activities of RC24 and seeing that the other officials of RC 24 fulfill their responsibilities, etc.
- b) The Vice-president chairs the Frederick H. Buttel Award Committee and is responsible for all duties associated with the award.
- c) The Secretary produces the Newsletter and is responsible for the operation of the listserver, getting messages out to members, etc.
- d) The members of the Board are expected to be active in representing RC24 and in organizing RC24 co-sponsored conferences in between the World Congresses, and for responding to requests for input and decisions from the President.

All RC 24 members are encouraged to submit nominations for these positions. When doing so keep in mind that the RC 24 Statutes specify that, "An effort shall be made to ensure a fair regional, national, and gender representation, and to ensure that each Board consists of some continuing and some new members. Board members should be nominated, above all, in recognition of their activity in and service to RC 24, and of their contributions to environmental sociology scholarship." Self-nominations are acceptable, and encouraged.

The members of the Nominations Committee are Riley Dunlap, USA, Chair; Koichi Hasegawa, Japan; and Gert Spaargaren, the Netherlands.

Submit nominations to Riley Dunlap at rdunlap@mail.ucf.edu by November 1, 2005 at the latest.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

"Local institution building for the environment: perspectives from East and West"

9 - 10 September 2004

Gorizia, Italy

Note from Luigi Pellizzoni

The CDROM with the proceedings of the 2004 Gorizia Conference is now available. If anyone is interested in receiving a copy, please send an email to the organizational editor of the CDROM, namely:

dr. Daniele Del Bianco at delbianco@isig.it

"Environment, Knowledge, and Democracy"

6-7 July 2005

Marseille, France

Report by Suzanne de Cheveigné¹

The Humanities Department of the Luminy Science Faculty of the University of the Mediterranean organised, in collaboration with the DESMID (UMR 6012) Espace and the SHADYC (CNRS-EHESS) laboratories, a conference of the Environment and Society Research Committee (RC24) of the International Sociological Association. During two days, plenary sessions and thematic workshops allowed researchers from 22 different countries² to present the results of their work in the field of the sociology of the environment. European sociologists no doubt formed the majority but all the continents were represented (Africa, Asia, America, Australia).

The inaugural plenary session was dedicated to the memory of Professor Frederick Buttel and his work. Initially a member of the scientific committee of this meeting, our colleague unfortunately died last January. It was natural for us to render homage to a former president of our international network of environmental sociology and one of the great figures of our discipline.

The scientific aim of this conference was to analyse the different dimensions of the construction of knowledge about the environment and the role it plays in decision processes. To carry out this project, we centred on four themes in parallel workshops:

1. The **border between expert and lay knowledge** was explored in 16 papers based on a range of empirical fieldwork studies. The variety of cases that were discussed allowed us to make international comparisons around such recurring questions as the role entrusted to experts, the demand for participation on the part of the population or on the contrary their lack of interest;
2. The workshop on the **cultural diversity of knowledge about nature and the environment** heard 19 papers. Judging by the analyses presented, the position occupied by what is known as "indigenous knowledge" in environmental debates has become a central question. The participants in this workshop examined the stakes raised in terms of management of the environment, of uniformity of knowledge or of cultural domination by Western references;
3. The **place of knowledge in decision making** was the theme of a third workshop where 20 papers were presented. The question aroused discussions about the scientific uncertainty underlying the diffusion of information and the taking of decisions. The introduction of citizens in the decision process was also touched on by several presentations that analyzed the forms but also the limits and side effects of participation mechanisms;
4. The workshop on **the Environment in the public sphere** put the accent on the development of new information technology and on its articulation with classical media. The 17 papers presented allowed us to debate the relations between knowledge provided by the media and social representations and practices.

At the end of the two days a final plenary session allowed all the participants to share elements of the debates that took place in the parallel workshops. In keeping with the comparative approach of this conference, two last papers were also given, one about the experience of a southern country, Brazil, the other about a northern one, Ireland.

¹ We thank the following institutions for their financial support: Ministère de l'Ecologie et du Développement Durable, ADEME, Conseil Régional PACA, Conseil Général des Bouches-du-Rhône and Université de la Méditerranée.

² Countries represented : Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Pakistan, Russia, Spain, Sweden, USA.

The complete proceedings will be published on a CD-Rom. An editorial process is also underway to allow us to publish a selection of articles, in French and in English, as an outcome of the conference.

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“Technonatures III: Environments, Technologies, Spaces and Places in the Twenty First Century”
37th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology
July 6th -9th 2005

Stockholm, Sweden

Report by Damian White

Over the last three years, Chris Wilbert (Anglia Polytechnic University, UK) and I have been running a series of symposia and conferences under the title ‘Technonatures’. The motivation for this project came from a strong sense which both of us shared that environmentalism and the environmental social sciences appear to be in a period of disorientation and perhaps transition. There are, of course, many reasons for the current crisis of environmentalism and environmental social theory, ranging from the internal decay of neo-Malthusian currents, the rise and consolidation of contrarian currents and the triumph of neoliberalism. In the technonatures events we wanted to create a space to discuss these developments, but to additionally explore the notion that perhaps part of the current dilemma that the environmental social sciences face is that we increasingly find ourselves locating ‘technonatural’ time/spaces.

Why technonatural though? At one level this term is clearly in debt to recent debates about social nature (Castree/Braun), the work of Haraway and Latour and growing ontological interest in thinking environmental questions in post naturalistic ‘hybrid’ or ‘cyborg’ terms. Equally though, the term potentially captures broader shifts that have occurred in the environmental social sciences of late. We argue that ‘technonatural sensibilities’ can be found in attempts to grapple with the environmental consequences of mobile sociologies (Urry) and network societies to growing interest in the technological colonization of the body.

Technonatures events had previously been held at The Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths College, the University of London (2003) and at the Department of Geography, University of Oxford (2004). At the World Congress of Sociology this summer, we explicitly sought to draw more environmental sociologists into the discussion and bring a more international flavour into this conversation. As such, in collaboration with RC24, we ran six RC24 sessions at the World Congress. Session titles varied from a concern with the environmental impact of information technology and biotechnology, to the rise of urban political ecology. From a call for papers which received over 40 responses, the sessions drew together 24 presenters. Classic currents of environmental sociology emerging from ecological modernization, environmental justice, ecoMarxist and ecoFeminist currents were well represented. But additionally, the ‘Technonatures’ event drew in currents that have not traditionally had much presence at RC24 events, notably colleagues interested in environmental sociology and the sociology of the body, post Humanist discourses, urban theory and sustainable architecture, the work of Deleuze and Guattari and advocates of actor network theory. The end result was a provocative and exciting set of discussions, debates and disputes on environmentalism, environmental sociology and its futures. Various publication plans are now afoot and we hope that various ‘technonatures’ publications will emerge in the next year or so.

Technonatures IV will occur at the 2006 Meeting of The American Association of Geographers, March 7-11 2006, Chicago, IL <http://www.aag.org/annualmeetings/index.cfm>. We would however be very keen to continue developing links with environmental sociologists working in the broad ‘Technonatures’ area.

We have plans to develop more interdisciplinary Technonatures which draw together colleagues in sociology/geography/science and technology studies. We are also keen to open out this process to all interested parties. As such, we would be very interested to hear from any RC24 colleagues that are either working in the broad 'Technonatures' area, interested in taking part in future technonatures or even hosting future events. Feel free to email me at whitedf@jmu.edu

“Double Standards and Simulation: Symbolism, Rhetoric and Irony in Eco-Politics” 1 - 4 September 2005

International Conference at the University of Bath, UK

Report by Ingolfur Blühdorn, Ian Welsh and Marcel Wissenburg

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/esml/conferences/index.htm>

The Environment is one of those areas where it is always difficult to decide whether the glass is half empty or half full – is there steady progress towards an environmentally orientated modernity or is there an irreversible trajectory of environmental consumption and destruction? The paradox of ecological modernisation and sustainable development progressing amidst accelerating species extinction rates and steadily accumulating evidence of systemic impacts in areas like climate change was an important backdrop to this conference. Held over a weekend dominated by media reports and images of an inundated and chaotic New Orleans, and in the aftermath of serious flooding in Austria, Switzerland and Bavaria the conference themes could not have been more appropriate.

The conference attracted delegates from across Europe, the US, Canada and Asia, and from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds underlining the inescapably interdisciplinary nature of the environmental problematic in terms of both theoretical and empirical stakes and engagement. These were addressed through a mixture of plenary sessions dealing with the theoretical significance of symbolism, rhetoric and irony and thematic sessions covering sustainable development, climate change, social movements, and new technologies. Given the diversity of disciplinary points of origin there was a marked degree of cross cutting synergy throughout the event with participants creatively engaging with presentations outside their primary disciplinary base(s). Those present included a nucleus of long standing members of RC24 and an encouraging number of new (and youthful) faces suggesting that a healthy process of generational renewal is in train as the consolidation of environmental engagement across disciplines begins to bear fruit. This bodes well for the future of RC24 as one of the most active research committees within the ISA and underlines the importance of interdisciplinary engagement.

A short weekend of high quality papers was, of course, too brief an engagement to resolve the paradox underpinning the conference but there was substantial progress in consolidating key themes and analytical challenges in this area. Recurrent themes included the centrality of embedded day to day cultural and social practices and economic imperatives in foreclosing viable strategies through the continuation of established habits of mind extending from policy domains to consumption practices. In terms of long standing approaches associating environmental politics with issues of interest representation and policy alignment directed towards an organic realm, there was much here to suggest that classical conceived environmentalism is indeed over. The need to academically engage with the symbolic, rhetorical and ironic aspects of eco-politics in terms of both the representation of the environmental problematic by politicians, scientists, policy makers, environmental NGOs and social movement actors and the reformulation of this problematic through symbolism, rhetoric and irony was one area where there was widespread agreement.

It would be invidious to single out particular contributions for comment here, but there is nothing wrong with quoting economist Hans Aage from Roskilde University, Denmark, who was saying ‘I have been waiting for years for someone to ask these questions openly as a conference theme’, or an unnamed professor from the NL who is a well known green political theorist and claims to have known ‘next to

nothing about environmental sociology': 'I was pleasantly surprised by the diversity of approaches – from the highly theoretical to the deeply dark data-digging. We've witnessed communication across borders of disciplines, traditions and languages more fruitful and inspiring than usual'. Well! That is certainly good news! A selection of papers from the conference will in due course appear as a special issue of *Environmental Politics* which will be a further addition to the impressive portfolio of RC24 and undoubtedly attract even more scholars to the study of double standards and simulation in eco-politics. It remains for us to express our thanks to those who participated and to RC24 for the support which made this event possible.

UPCOMING CONFERENCE

Information on the ISA World Congress at Durban

Arthur Mol and Ray Murphy

As we are approaching deadlines for sending in abstracts for papers to be included in the RC24 sessions at the ISA World Congress in Durban, South Africa, it seems good to give you some further information on procedures and time lines.

As RC24 we have secured 17 sessions, alone or with other RCs. This amount might still change depending on the amount of RC24 members in good standing in January 2006 (good standing here means: also being a member of ISA). You are able to find information on the sessions, session coordinators and the World Congress on the ISA website, most notably the site http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/congress2006/rc/rc24_durban.htm). Each session can contain around 5 papers. Now, there are a number of key deadlines:

- i) before November, 15, 2005: abstracts of papers should be in the hands of session organizers (The 1 October 2005 deadline given on the ISA website is wrong)
- ii) before December 15, 2005: session programs with accepted papers should be sent by the session organizers to the program coordinators (Ray and Arthur)
- iii) in January 2006 RC24 entire program has to be send to ISA

So make sure that you contact one of the session coordinators, send in your abstract and get it accepted by the coordinators before November 15, 2005.

It is good to point out that all paper givers need to register with their paper and abstract also with ISA, via the ISA website. Only a paper that has been admitted to one of the sessions can be registered as such by the ISA. ISA registration is meant for inclusion in the book of abstracts and the final program, but ISA checks whether the paper has been accepted for – in our case – the RC24 program.

To be sure: everybody can send in abstracts to RC24 sessions, irrespective of whether they are member of ISA and/or RC24. But they can only present at Durban if they also register as a participant at the conference, pay the conference fees, and register their paper title and abstract. Conference fees are much higher if you are not member of the ISA, so there is a clear incentive to become a member just before the World Congress.

If a paper presenter cannot be accommodated with an abstract in the session of his/her preference due to the fact that that session is full or the topic does not fit, he/she will be referred to another session or to the program coordinators. As program coordinators we will do our utmost to accommodate all quality abstracts and papers.

Finally, I had a quick look at the accommodations in Durban and had a talk with one of the 'locals', David Fig. It seems that the coastal area in Durban is pretty safe for walking and not too far from the conference centre. The B-category hotel Balmoral is located at the beach (with room rates of around 600 Rand, around 60 Euro). I would suggest we make this hotel a kind of RC24 hotel if people want to group together.

RC24 sessions at ISA World Congress 2006
July 23-29, 2006
Durban, South Africa

RC24 will organize 14 sessions on its own, one together with one other RC, and one (or perhaps two) together with two other RCs. If you plan to present a paper in one of the sessions, contact one of the two session organizers directly, as listed below. For more information on the ISA World Congress, see their website <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/congress2006/>. There information is listed on hotels and travelling, local conditions, fellowships, etc. RC24 will only have a few travel fellowship for RC24 members from C (and B) countries.

1. Civil Society and the Environmental State: Directions in Environmental Governance

Organizers: Dana Fisher & Ingolfur Bluedorn
drf2004@columbia.edu and mlsib@bath.ac.uk

What can be expected from the state in terms of environmental regulation? What are the capacities and capabilities of civil society actors for environmental self-regulation? Much of the literature on environmental movements and environmentalism from below has been equally critical of the economy and the state, but has demanded (eco) political control and regulation of the economy via civil society. The literature on ecological modernisation and Third Way politics, in contrast, has strongly relied on the proactive state as the main environmental regulator taking environmental responsibility, and on economic/market instruments for the implementation of environmental targets. However, there is evidence that the state has, at best, taken symbolic action; whilst civil society has often opposed environmental regulation imposed by the state. The workshop invites papers investigating the limited commitment of the state (and international regimes) and of civil society (including activists as well as transnational networks) as eco-political actors.

2. Globalization and Environment

Timmons Roberts & Maria Tysiachniouk
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What are the elements of globalization which are leading to the destruction of the world's environment? What elements include hopeful trends? This session will bring together diverse approaches to environmental sociology's insights into these questions.

3. Innovation and Controversy in Theories of Environment and Society

Gert Spaargaren & Peter Dickens
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The past half decade or so has witnessed remarkable ferment in theory development in environmental sociology. These efforts have included theoretical innovations and new perspectives (e.g., global environmental flows), rediscovery of preexisting theories (STIRPAT elaborations of neo-Malthusianism, Jeavons paradox), and new controversies. Papers that reflect on recent theoretical advances and debates are welcome, as are papers that identify needed areas of theoretical development in environmental sociology.

4. Environmental Justice for Sustainable Development

Hellmuth Lange & Dai-Yeun Jeong

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A large amount of research has been done on sustainable development with a focus on the relationship between environmental preservation and economic development. Although justice is a core issue of Agenda 21 too, research on environmental justice and sustainability is still relatively rare. As a consequence, there is a substantial need for elaborating more detailed theoretical framings and, as a consequence, for conceptualising the issue in a political perspective. Therefore, this session invites contributions presenting theoretical and/or empirical findings on environmental justice in relation to sustainability.

5. Environmental Movements and Environmental Organizations for a Sustainable Future

Koichi Hasegawa and Bill Markham

hasegawa3116@yahoo.co.jp and bill@uncg.edu

This session will focus on social movements and social movement organizations that operate on the national or international level to bring about social changes that would benefit the environment and create a sustainable future. Papers that address citizens' motivations to participate in environmental movements and organizations, the internal dynamics of environmental movements and organizations, or on how such movements and organizations shape and are shaped by their host societies are welcome.

6. Consumption and lifestyles

Maurie Cohen and Mette Jensen

mcohen@adm.njit.edu and mje@dmu.dk

Papers in this session will address the social, political, and cultural dimensions of sustainable consumption and lifestyles. The primary emphasis will be on household provisioning, mobility practices, and general resource consumption in affluent countries, but we also invite contributions on the environmental implications of contemporary consumption and lifestyle practices in developing nations and in a global context.

7. Environmental attitudes and behaviors

Riley Dunlap and Seejae Lee

rdunlap@mail.ucf.edu and seejaelee@catholic.ac.kr

Papers dealing with all aspects of what can be termed "environmental or ecological consciousness" (attitudes, beliefs, values, etc.) and behaviors are welcome, although those reporting empirical analyses (whether quantitative or qualitative) will be given preference. Papers reporting cross-national comparisons are especially welcome, but all submissions will be given consideration.

8. Science, technology and risk

Cecilia Claeys Mekdade and Gene Rosa

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This session is devoted to the dynamics between scientific and technological change and risks to humans, social systems, or ecosystems. Encouraged are theoretical, empirical, and policy papers that trace the linkages of these dynamics, especially the linkages between science and technological change and emergent threats to environmental sustainability.

9. Environmental and Health Issues Related to Food Production and Consumption

Julia Guivant and Ralph Matthews

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The environmental and related human health impacts of food production and food consumption have become dominant environmental concerns of the twenty-first century. Of particular concern are the environmental impacts of genetically modified foods; the impact of industrial agriculture and husbandry on the environment; and the industrialization of the oceans through both extensive over fishing and the extensive expansions of aquaculture. Related to this are the environmental impacts of government policies in both underdeveloped and developed countries aimed at food safety and food security. This session seeks papers which provide both conceptual and empirical analysis that casts insight into the environmental impact of food production and consumption, particularly as this involves public policy, the role of science, and new trends in the networks from/to table-farm.

10. Community, Natural Resources, and the Environment

David Sonnenfeld and Stewart Lockie

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This session deals with the following topics: the role of communities in natural resource management; community-driven environmental regulation; community-state and community-NGO relations in environmental policymaking; inter and intra-community conflicts in natural resource use; gender, communities, and the environment; communities, property regimes, and the environment; research methods in communities, natural resources, and the environment; and related topics.

11. Nature by design

Matthias Gross and Kelly Moore

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For many environmental activists restoring and designing ecosystems is seen as a way of compensating for unavoidable exploitation and also as a basis for a positive, intimate relationship between society and the rest of nature. These activists are challenging sociological theorizing about nature because they place an emphasis on interacting with nature in ways that established sociological principles cannot explain. Furthermore, while acknowledging that the role of professional ecologists is often important, the hands-on practitioners, such as volunteers and amateurs, often achieve insights that contribute to and even challenge existing ideas about the ecology of the system being restored. In this session papers that theoretically and empirically tackle the challenge of including nature into sociological thinking are invited for submission. This for instance includes theoretical and empirical work in ecological restoration, adaptive management, urban park design, ecological field experiments, and related fields.

12. African Environments: the impact of global apartheid?

Jacklyn Cock and David Fig

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Africa is characterized by increasing poverty, aids and environmental degradation. The challenge of the twenty first century is whether it can reverse this pattern of exclusion which is partly a legacy of colonial role. In order to incentivise participants attending the Africa session, a field trip will be organized to the South Durban basin. This area contains all the contradictions; it is a living case study from which we can generalize about African environments.

13. Current Research in Environmental Sociology

Arthur Mol and Ray Murphy

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This session will look into recent developments in environmental sociology, both theoretically and empirically.

14. Disasters and the Environment

Joint session with RC24 and RC39

Ray Murphy and Joe Scanlon

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Disasters have been referred to as ‘the monitor of development’, as ‘unpaid bills’, and as an externalized ‘debt of development’. They are symptomatic of the adaptive fitness of society’s relationship to its environment. Sustainability and disaster are inversely related, especially when one recognizes that disasters are not always sudden and can also be slow-onset. The intensified activities of industrialization have exacerbated vulnerability and will likely increase the frequency and cost of disasters in the 21st Century. Cultural expectations of safety and invulnerability can lead to disastrous consequences by encouraging social constructions that are incompatible with nature’s constructions. Environmental problems act as catalysts of disaster and disasters can exacerbate environmental problems. Environmental sociology consists of the investigation of potential disasters involving the material environment. Disasters give a preview of what could happen if environmental problems are not solved. Findings of ‘failures of prophecy’, ‘incubation of disaster’, ‘catastrophic mistakes’, ‘normal accidents’, ‘man-made disasters’, ‘repeat disasters’, ‘disasters by design’, and ‘unnatural disasters’ have an ominous ring for environmental sociologists who seek to learn more not only about the social construction of environmental perceptions, discourse and practices but also about their material consequences. This session seeks to broaden and deepen the perspectives of both disaster sociology and environmental sociology through a dialogue between them.

15. New technologies, public participation and environmental monitoring: new possibilities for public engagement?

Steven Yearly and Maria Eugénia Rodrigues

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This session aims to gather international case-study and conceptual analysis that looks at the idea that new forms of portable and publicly available technologies (from cell phones, picture-phones, laptops, small sensing devices and so on) could be used to spread access to monitoring capability. Such developments might also allow people to monitor “the environment” in ways which fit with their own understanding/evaluation of the environment. Thus, the idea is to look at some examples which might be seen as exemplifying this democratizing trend but also to invite critical analysis, both in principle and practice.

16. Environmental Challenges of City-Regions in a Globalizing World

Joint session with RC21, RC24 and RC47

Louis Guay & Pierre Hamel

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City-regions are increasingly on the top of the agenda of territorial public policy. This is related to demographic and spatial change, but also to the expansion of the knowledge economy at a global scale.

Beyond the new urban hierarchy – which goes hand in hand with an increasing concentration of capitalist accumulation – emerging out of demographic and economic changes, environmental issues are becoming paramount and multifaceted. They are linked to urban sprawl, to the quality of city life as well as to the capacity of local and metropolitan governments to manage environmental controversies. The objective of this panel is above all to assess the importance of environmental issues and their relationships to other aspects of city-region's development in a comparative perspective. In what terms are environmental challenges defined by social and political actors within city-regions? Under what conditions is urban development in city-regions compatible with environmental protection? To what extent can environmental justice be considered a main concern of metropolitan governance? These questions are only a small sample of the environmental concerns of city regions' development. Nevertheless, we think that if the development of city-regions is on the urban agenda, this question cannot be dealt with without taking into account environmental issues. This is mainly what we intend to explore in the session.

17. Science, Ecology and Economics in a globalized world. Science and Technology confronting the ecological crisis.

Joint session with RC02, RC23 and RC24

Andrew Jorgenson, Marja Häyrynen-Alestalo and Arthur P.J. Mol

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What are the positive/negative effects of the applications of Science and Technology to the environmental problems in a local, regional and worldwide context? What is new about the use of S&T in terms of ecological sustainability? Is society doing its job to reverse the environmental deterioration trend? Is there a proper balance between costs of sustainability and reasonable profit?

PUBLICATIONS, ETC.

Rosa, Eugene A., 2005 (Committee Co-Author), Thinking Strategically: The Appropriate Use of Metrics for Climate Change, Report of the Committee on Metrics for Global Change Research, Washington, DC: National Research Council/ National Academy of Sciences.

Rosa, Eugene A. 2005 (Committee Co-Author), Implementing Climate and Global Change Research: A Review of the Final U.S. Climate Change Science Program Strategic Plan, Washington, DC: National Research Council/ National Academy of Sciences.

Rosa, Eugene A., 2004, "Celebrating a Citation Classic and More: Symposium on Charles Perrow's Normal Accidents." *Organization and Environment*, 18: 229-234.

Rosa, Eugene A. and Noriyuki Matsuda, 2005, "Risk Perception in the Risk Society: The Cognitive Architecture of Risk Between Americans and Japanese", pp. 113-130 in Yoichiro Murakami, Noriko Kawamura, and Shin Chiba, (Eds), *Peace, Security, and Kyosei*, Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press.

York, Richard, Eugene A. Rosa, and Thomas Dietz, 2004, "The Ecological Footprint Intensity of National Economies", *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, 8:139-154.

York, Richard and Eugene A. Rosa, 2005, "Societal Processes and Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Emissions: Critical Comment on Post Industrialization and Environmental Quality: an Empirical Analysis of the Environmental State", *Social Forces*, volume 84 (forthcoming).

York, Richard and Eugene A. Rosa, 2005, "Urbanization and the Environment", in George Ritzer (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, London: Blackwell (forthcoming).

Research Website:

The STIRPAT research program, representing over a decade of cumulative empirical research on macro environmental impacts, is now on the internet at stirpat.org. The program was initiated in 1994 by Thomas Dietz and Eugene Rosa, where they laid out the general contours of the STIRPAT model, followed by an initial empirical test. With the subsequent addition of Richard York to the team a number of conceptual refinements and further empirical tests appeared in rapid succession. The website outlines the ecological principles on which the research is based (mis-labeled a "Malthusian" approach by some critics) and identifies STIRPAT as Structural Human Ecology to emphasize its macrosociological orientation to understanding the recursive relationship between social and ecological systems. The website describes the fundamental goals of this research program, explains the evolution of the program, and provides a comprehensive bibliography of STIRPAT publications plus publications from its predecessor, the IPAT. Questions or comments about the program or the site are welcome and should be directed to any of the three team members.

Environmental Art:

Gene Rosa, an affiliated professor of fine art at Washington State University, will have four of his recent pieces included in the WSU faculty show (8/16/05 to 9/17/05) at the Washington State University Museum of Art. The four pieces are representative of Gene's genre of sculptural art for which he coined the term "ecolage"—a reshaping of the art terms bricolage and assemblage to reflect their conscious reflection on the environment. The titles of the four pieces are: "Yves Trail Mix," "Ceci N'est Pas Une Personne (en miniature)", "DineThrob", and "Biosfear I." and should be available for viewing very soon on his website: <http://cooley.libarts.wsu.edu/rosa>.



USEFUL REFERRALS

Please consult the other sections of this website for the following information

List of Board members of RC24

How to become a member of RC24.

Statutes

Previous Newsletters

In Memoriam Frederick H. Buttel